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AUTHOR Fussell, Polly L.; Carter, Cecil E., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

This 1968 study explored role perceptions of junior Four H leaders and identified some factors in role performance. Hypotheses were tested relating to their role expectations, performance and self evaluation of preparedness for the role. Questionnaires were administered to 279 junior leaders, 121 adult leaders, and 36 Extension agents in 15 Tennessee counties. These were among the findings: (1) adult leaders felt that junior leaders should perform more tasks than Extension agents felt they should; (2) the three groups disagreed as to the relative importance of the five task groups, or roles, of junior leaders; (3) task expectations, task performance, and self perceived preparedness were significantly related, especially for number and frequency of tasks performed; (4) sex and junior Four H club meeting attendance were significantly related to junior leaders' role perceptions; (5) high task performance and sense of preparedness were both related to such characteristics as membership in clubs other than Four H, attendance at Four H events, offices held in Four H, attendance at junior Four H meetings, time spent working with adult leaders, and parental involvement past or present. (author/ly)

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A Research Summary of a Graduate Study

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO THE ROLE PERFORMANCE OF 4-H JUNIOR LEADERS IN SELECTED TENNESSEE COUNTIES

Polly L. Fussell
and
Cecil R. Carter, Jr.

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TRAINING AND STUDIES DEPARTMENT
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO THE ROLE PERFORMANCE OF 4-H JUNIOR LEADERS IN SELECTED TENNESSEE COUNTIES

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Polly L. Fussell

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Cecil E. Carter, Jr.

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to explore the role perceptions of junior leaders and identify some factors which might influence junior leaders' role performance. There were 13 hypotheses tested in the study which were related to junior leaders' role expectations, role performance, and preparedness to perform their role.

The population consisted of 279 4-H junior leaders, 121 adult leaders, and 36 Extension agents who were responsible for the 4-H program in 15 selected Tennessee counties.

The data were collected in May and June, 1968, by three separate questionnaires: one each for adult 4-H leaders, junior leaders, and Extension agents. Numbers and percentages were used in the descriptive summary of findings. A contingency table analysis program was used in the analysis of data. Chi square values which reached the .05 level were accepted as statistically significant.

In support of the three specific objectives of the study, the major findings are given below.

Perception of the Role of Junior Leaders

There were both agreement and disagreement among junior leaders, adult leaders, and Extension agents concerning the role of junior leaders:

1. Adult leaders felt the junior leaders should perform more tasks than did the Extension agents.

2. Adult leaders, junior leaders, and Extension agents disagreed as to the relative importance of the five task groups, or roles, of junior leaders: Junior leaders felt that more of the planning and conducting 4-H events and self-improvement tasks should be included in the major role of junior leaders; adult leaders felt that more of the organizational tasks should be included in the major role of junior leaders; while Extension agents felt that more of the tasks concerning planning and conducting 4-H events and activities, project leadership, and self-improvement should be included in the major role of junior leaders.

3. The three audience groups felt that more 4-H promotional tasks were least important to the role of junior leaders. There was agreement among junior leaders and adult leaders as to the number of project leadership tasks ranked as least important, whereas, Extension agents felt that the organizational tasks were of second least importance.

The Relation Between Junior Leaders' Task Expectations, Task Performance, and the Degree to Which They Felt Prepared to Perform Tasks

There were significant relationships (.001 level) between junior leaders' task expectations, task performance, and their preparedness to

perform tasks: (1) junior leaders who felt better prepared to perform more tasks tended to perform a larger number of tasks more frequently; (2) junior leaders who felt that they should perform a larger number of tasks tended to perform a larger number of tasks more frequently; and (3) junior leaders who felt that they should perform a larger number of tasks tended to feel better prepared to perform more tasks.

Junior Leaders' Personal and Leadership Characteristics Related to Their Task Performance

Task expectations. The sex of junior leaders and their attendance at junior 4-H Club meetings were significantly related to the number of tasks which junior leaders felt they should perform.

Task performance. Junior leaders' personal and leadership characteristics which were significantly related with "high task performance" included: (1) age; (2) the number of clubs other than 4-H in which junior leaders held membership; (3) the number of 4-H projects, activities, and special senior recognition opportunities in which junior leaders were enrolled; (4) number of 4-H offices held; (5) the number of state, regional, or national 4-H events attended; (6) amount of time spent working with adult 4-H leaders; (7) attendance at training meetings; (8) attendance at junior 4-H Club meetings; and (9) parents who were serving or had served as 4-H leaders.

Preparedness to perform tasks. Seven of the junior leaders' personal and leadership characteristics were significantly related to

their feeling prepared to perform tasks: (1) the number of clubs other than 4-H in which junior leaders held membership; (2) number of 4-H offices held; (3) the number of state, regional, or national 4-H events attended; (4) parents who were serving, or had served, as 4-H leaders; (5) attendance at junior 4-H Club meetings; and (7) amount of time spent working with adult leaders.

Implications for program development in the junior leadership area and recommendations for further study were given.

RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. PURPOSE, SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify the role of junior leaders and some factors which influence their role performance.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To determine the perception junior leaders, adult leaders, and Extension agents had of the role of 4-H junior leaders.

2. To determine the relation between 4-H junior leaders' role expectations, role performance, and the degree to which they felt prepared to perform this role.

3. To identify some personal and leadership characteristics of junior leaders which influence their perception and performance of junior leader roles.

Such a study was undertaken because of the wide variation in junior leader role performance from county to county within the state. It was believed that data from such a study would be helpful to further clarify the role of 4-H junior leaders in Tennessee.

*Cecil E. Carter, Jr., Assistant Training and Studies Specialist, University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Polly L. Fussell, Assistant 4-H Club Specialist, University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Hypotheses

There were 13 null hypotheses tested in the study. Three hypotheses dealt with the relationship between junior leaders' role expectations, role performance, and feeling prepared to perform their role. The other ten hypotheses were concerned with the relationship between ten personal characteristics of junior leaders and their role expectations, role performance, and feeling of preparedness to perform their role.

II. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population consisted of 479 junior 4-H leaders, 121 adult leaders, and 36 Extension agents who were responsible for the 4-H program in 15 selected Tennessee counties. The counties, three from each of the five Extension districts, were selected by the District Extension Supervisors on the basis of the over-all superior effectiveness of their county 4-H junior leadership program. Such factors as consistent 4-H junior leadership enrollment, the number and types of tasks performed by junior leaders, and training provided junior leaders were taken into account in selecting the counties.

Three data collection instruments were developed: one each for junior leaders, adult leaders, and Extension agents. Each questionnaire included a section dealing with personal information concerning the respondent. Other major questions related to junior leaders' task expectations, task performance, and their feeling prepared to perform

tasks. Completed mail questionnaires, in useable form, were returned by 297 junior leaders, 62 percent; 121 adult leaders, 77 percent; and 36 Extension agents, 100 percent.

III. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The completed questionnaires were coded and responses were recorded on code sheets. Data were punched on data processing cards. Computations were made by The University of Tennessee Computing Center. A contingency table analysis program was used. This program computed two-way frequency and percentage tables, chi squares, and contingency coefficients. Output for this program included (1) frequency tables; (2) row, column, and table percentages; and (3) chi square and degrees of freedom. Chi square values which reached the .05 level were accepted as being statistically significant.

The data were tabulated separately for the junior leaders, adult leaders, and Extension agents. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the subjects' backgrounds.

Responses to the questions related to junior leader task expectations, task performance, and preparedness to perform tasks were counted. The total of these scores was used to classify junior leaders into high to low task expectation, task performance, and task qualification groups. Ten junior leader characteristics were analyzed as to their relation to junior leaders' task expectations, task performance, and feeling of preparedness to perform tasks.

This same procedure was followed in scoring the Extension agents' and adult leaders' responses to the importance which they placed on the 61 junior leader tasks.

The 61 junior leader tasks were studied as to their importance to the role of the junior leader. These tasks were classified into five task groupings, which were concerned with (1) teaching and providing assistance to other 4-H'ers on their 4-H project or activity; (2) organizing and the conducting of a 4-H Club; (3) planning and conducting local, county, and district 4-H events; (4) promoting 4-H through public presentations, exhibits, and news media; and (5) the junior leaders preparing themselves to serve as junior leaders.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

Major findings were classified and will be presented under group headings related to the three objectives of the study.

Perceptions Junior Leaders, Adult Leaders, and Extension Agents Had of the Role of Junior Leaders in the County 4-H Program

1. Adult leaders felt junior leaders should perform more tasks than did the Extension agents.

2. Adult leaders, junior leaders, and Extension agents disagreed somewhat as to the relative importance of the five groups of tasks, or roles, of junior leaders.

3. Junior leaders felt that more of the planning and conducting 4-H events and self-improvement tasks should be the major role of junior leaders.

4. Adult leaders felt that performing the organizational tasks should be the major role of junior leaders.

5. Extension agents felt that performing tasks concerning planning and conducting 4-H events and activities, project leadership, and self-improvement should be the major role of junior leaders.

6. Junior leaders, adult leaders, and Extension agents felt that 4-H promotional tasks were least important to the role of junior leaders.

7. There was agreement among junior leaders and adult leaders as to the lack of importance of the project leadership tasks, whereas, the Extension agents felt that the organizational tasks were second in least importance.

The Relation Between Junior Leaders' Role Expectations, Role Performance, and the Degree to Which They Felt Prepared to Perform Their Role

There were significant relationships (.001 level) between these three variables:

1. Junior leaders who felt better prepared to perform more tasks tended to perform a larger number of tasks.

2. Junior leaders who felt that they should perform a larger number of tasks tended to perform a larger number of tasks.

3. Junior leaders who felt that they should perform a larger number of tasks tended to feel better prepared to perform more tasks.

Junior Leader Characteristics Which Influence Their Role Performance

1. Age of the junior leaders did not significantly influence the number of tasks they felt junior leaders should perform.

2. Junior leaders 17 years of age and over tended to perform more tasks than those under 17 years of age.

3. The older junior leaders did not tend to feel significantly better prepared to perform tasks than younger leaders, though some positive relation was noted.

4. Girls felt that junior leaders should perform a significantly larger number of tasks than did the boys.

5. Sex of junior leaders did not significantly influence the frequency with which junior leaders performed tasks, nor their feeling of preparedness to perform tasks.

6. Junior leaders who held membership in a larger number of youth organizations did not differ significantly from those who belonged to fewer organizations, in regard to the number of tasks which they felt junior leaders should perform, though some positive relation was indicated.

7. Junior leaders who belonged to six or more clubs other than 4-H tended to perform more tasks than those who belonged to fewer youth organizations.

8. Junior leaders who belonged to a larger number of youth organizations tended to feel better prepared to perform a larger number of tasks than those who belonged to fewer youth organizations.

9. Junior leaders who were enrolled in a larger number of 4-H projects, activities, or special senior recognition opportunities tended to perform more tasks than those enrolled in fewer projects, activities, or special senior recognition opportunities.

10. Junior leaders who had held more 4-H offices did not differ significantly in the number of tasks which they felt they should perform from those who had held fewer 4-H offices.

11. Junior leaders who had held more 4-H offices tended to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who had held fewer offices.

12. Junior leaders who held a greater number of 4-H offices tended to feel better prepared to perform more tasks than those who had held a fewer number of offices.

13. Attendance at state, regional, or national 4-H events did not appear to significantly influence the number of tasks which junior leaders felt they should perform.

14. Junior leaders who attended a larger number of state, regional, or national 4-H events tended to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who had not attended such events.

15. Junior leaders who attended a larger number of state, regional, or national 4-H events tended to feel better prepared to perform a larger number of tasks than those junior leaders who had not attended such events.

16. Junior leaders' parents serving or having served as 4-H leaders did not significantly influence the number of tasks which they felt junior leaders should perform.

17. Junior leaders who had parents serving, or who had served, as 4-H leaders tended to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who did not have 4-H leader parents.

18. Junior leaders who had parents serving, or who had served, as 4-H leaders tended to feel better prepared to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who did not have 4-H leader parents.

19. Attendance at training meetings did not significantly influence the number of tasks which junior leaders felt they should perform, though some positive tendency in this direction was indicated.

20. Junior leaders who attended training meetings tended to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who did not attend training meetings.

21. Junior leaders who attended training meetings tended to feel better prepared to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who did not attend training meetings.

22. Junior leaders who attended junior 4-H Club meetings tended to feel that junior leaders should perform a larger number of tasks than those junior leaders who did not attend junior 4-H Club meetings.

23. Junior leaders who attended junior 4-H Club meetings tended to perform more tasks than those junior leaders who did not attend junior 4-H Club meetings.

24. Junior leaders who attended junior 4-H Club meetings tended to feel better prepared to perform a larger number of tasks than those who did not attend junior 4-H Club meetings.

25. The amount of time which junior leaders spent working with adult leaders did not appear to significantly influence the number of tasks which junior leaders felt they should perform.

26. Junior leaders who spent more time working with adult leaders tended to perform more tasks than those who worked little or none with adult leaders.

27. Junior leaders who spent more time working with adult leaders tended to feel better prepared to perform a larger number of tasks than those who worked very little or none with adult leaders.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn.

Perception of the Role of Junior Leaders

It was concluded that the specific role definition for junior leaders remains quite vague among junior leaders, adult leaders, and Extension agents. As was cited in the literature, role conflicts are likely to follow from ambiguous role expectations. Thus, to obtain the maximum benefit from junior leaders' involvement in the 4-H program, it appears necessary that junior leadership tasks be specifically delineated and be understood by junior leaders and those with whom they work, e.g., adult leaders, Extension agents, junior 4-H members, district supervisors, etc.

Junior Leader Task Expectations, Frequency of Performing Tasks, and Being Prepared to Perform Tasks

1. It was concluded that junior leaders tended to perform those tasks which they felt qualified to perform. Therefore, to increase

task performance, it would seem to be necessary to help a larger number of junior leaders feel more competent to perform more tasks.

2. It was concluded that junior leaders tended to perform those tasks which they felt were most appropriate to their role. Thus, task performance may be increased by improving junior leaders' understanding of the tasks which they are expected to perform.

3. It was concluded that the degree to which junior leaders felt qualified to perform tasks tended to influence the selection of tasks which chey felt to be appropriate to perform. Therefore, to increase task expectations, training programs should help junior leaders increase their self-confidence and feeling of competence to perform a larger number of designated tasks.

Junior Leader Characteristics Related to Task Expectations, Task Performance, and Feeling Prepared to Perform Tasks

Characteristics related to task expectations. It was concluded that two characteristics were significantly related to junior leaders' task expectations. The relation between sex and task expectations revealed that girls tended to feel that junior leaders should perform a larger number of tasks than male junior leaders. Thus, to increase junior leaders' tasks expectations, additional training focused on the "expected role of junior leaders" should be provided the boys who are serving as junior leaders.

Junior leaders who had attended junior 4-H Club meetings tended to feel that junior leaders should perform more tasks. Thus, working

toward a situation where more junior leaders would attend junior 4-H meetings should help junior leaders to become more aware of tasks which should be performed.

Characteristics related to task performance. Nine characteristics were related to the frequency with which junior leaders performed tasks. Junior leaders who were classified as "high performers" tended to be those who:

1. Were in the 17-19 age group.

2. Belonged to a larger number of clubs other than 4-H. They were not "too busy" which is given many times as a reason for low performance.

3. Had broader interests in other areas of the 4-H program; they were enrolled in more 4-H projects, activities, or special senior recognition opportunities.

4. Had held more 4-H offices.

5. Had attended a larger number of state, regional, or national 4-H events.

6. Spent more time working with adult 4-H leaders.

7. Had attended more training meetings.

8. Had attended junior 4-H Club meetings and assisted with club activities.

9. Had parents who were serving, or had served, as 4-H leaders.

Thus, to increase the level of junior leaders' task performance, it would appear that (1) junior leaders should be encouraged to work with an adult leader or advisor; (2) more training should be provided

junior leaders on a group basis; (3) more junior leaders should be encouraged to work with younger 4-H members in group situations, e.g., junior 4-H club, project group, or special interest group; (4) acquaint more of the parents of junior leaders with the 4-H program and the values of the program for its members; (5) more district events, workshops and conferences of special interest to the senior age group should be provided; and (6) opportunities for younger junior leaders to work with the older, more mature junior leaders should be considered.

Characteristics related to junior leaders' feeling prepared to perform tasks. It was concluded that seven characteristics of junior leaders were significantly related to their feeling prepared to perform tasks. Those who felt better prepared to perform a larger number of tasks tended to be those junior leaders who:

1. Belonged to larger number of clubs other than 4-H.
2. Had held more 4-H offices.
3. Had attended more state, regional, or national 4-H events.
4. Had parents who were serving, or had served, as 4-H leaders.
5. Had attended more training meetings.
6. Had attended junior 4-H Club meetings and assisted with club activities.
7. Spent more time working with adult leaders.

Each of the seven characteristics seemed to be a type of leadership training, some more specifically oriented to junior leadership than others. Thus, the implication was that a variety of such

learning experiences should enable junior leaders to feel more self-confident and more competent to perform a greater number of tasks. Therefore, it would appear that more of these broad leadership training experiences should be provided the junior leaders who are enrolled in the 4-H junior leadership activity.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications are made based upon the findings of this study and the review of related litarature and research.

1. In view of the varied maturity levels of the 13 to 19 age group, attention should be given to an expanded two-level leadership program which would include junior leadership for the 13- to 15-age group and teen leadership for the 16- to 19-age category. Consideration should be given to revising the state 4-H Junior Leadership Outline and Report, publication 335.

2. The classification of junior leadership should be re-defined from a special senior recognition opportunity to a category, such as a project or an activity, which would more adequately describe the learning experiences provided through this program.

3. In-service training should be provided for county Extension agents, responsible for 4-H, dealing with the role of junior leaders, and how to more effectively train junior leaders to perform their role.

4. County staffs should consider providing expanded training for junior leaders dealing particularly with bringing about a better understanding of their role as junior leaders and how to more effectively

function as a junior leader. Training should be concentrated with first- and second-year junior leaders.

5. Further attention should be given to the need for county-wide junior leader special interest groups, organized in a flexible manner. Such coeducational group activity should provide additional opportunities for leadership training, social experiences, and the exchange of ideas with other junior and teen leaders. Learning situations of this type would meet some of the developmental needs of the adolescent as were cited in the review of literature.

6. Leadership conferences and workshops should be provided for the 16- to 19-age group (teen leaders) at the district level on a coeducational basis. Some of the 4-H teen leaders should assist with planning and conducting the conference.

Teen leaders participating in this training should be encouraged to assist with training and working with first- and second-year junior leaders in their county. This association should be valuable from the standpoint of identity for the younger junior leaders.

7. Junior leaders should be knowledgeable of the tasks for which they are expected to perform. Extension agents, adult leaders, and junior leaders should have a mutual understanding of these responsibilities. The adult leader or adult advisor and the junior leader need to determine the specific tasks for which each will be responsible.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following recommendations are made for further study of the 4-H junior leadership program:

1. Age groups for which various junior leadership tasks are most appropriate, identifying the more difficult tasks.

2. Reasons why members drop out of the junior leadership activity.

3. The development of a set of criteria to evaluate successful junior leader programs and the progress of individual junior leaders.

4. The effectiveness of present training programs for junior leaders, e.g., content and method.

5. Adequacy of present recognition programs for junior leaders.

6. The same study conducted with a random sample of selected counties.

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